

CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION OF FRESNO COUNTY

**Monthly Meeting
March 6, 2002 - 3:00 p.m.**

**Children & Families Commission Offices
University of California Building
550 E. Shaw, Suite 215
Fresno, CA**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

Recommendations:

Approve Commission Minutes – February 20, 2002 Special Meeting

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2002 SPECIAL MEETING

Present: Chair Bob Waterston, Vice Commissioner Luisa Medina, Secretary/Treasurer Gary Carozza, Commissioners Marion Karian, Roseanne Lascano, Kathleen McIntyre, LeeAnn Parry; Executive Director Steve Gordon

Absent: Oscar Sablan, Gary Zomalt

Commissioner Waterston called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.; a quorum was established. The Chair reviewed the rules for the Special Meeting, stating that the only discussion would be on the two agenda items noticed. He stated that public comment would be limited to one two-minute statement per person.

1. Discuss and Approve the Establishment of an Advisory Committee

Director Gordon reviewed Commission action at the Feb. 6 meeting in forming an Ad Hoc Committee to finalize the composition and structure of an Advisory Committee.

Commissioners Parry and Karian and community members Vickie Hoyle (Fresno County EOC) and Kim Lamb (Children's Hospital) served on the Ad Hoc Committee and met with staff February 15 to revise and finalize the structure and operating guidelines of the Advisory Committee presented here (Attachment A).

Special Projects Coordinator Brian Mimura highlighted the changes suggested by the Ad Hoc Committee from what was presented at the February 6 meeting.

Composition: Increase the parent members to no less than four and added that one of the parent members be a parent of a special needs child. At the suggestion of the Ad Hoc Committee, "mental health" was separated from "alcohol, drugs and mental health" as a distinct discipline and "child abuse and domestic violence" was added. By consensus, the Ad Hoc Committee agreed that membership should reside with the individual on the Advisory Committee rather than the individual's organization or agency or a specific program.

Chair Waterston questioned the size of the proposed committee, stating that, in his experience, a committee larger than about 15 members becomes unmanageable, often with "power blocks" being formed within the committee.

Commissioner McIntyre asked whether, with nine areas of expertise, there was a need for 20 members. Mimura replied that this list of areas of expertise was meant as a starting point and was not necessarily all inclusive.

Meetings: The Ad Hoc Committee suggested the expectation be that the Advisory Committee meet monthly, as necessary, and that there be no fewer than four meetings annually.

Decision-Making: Added a statement on revision of the operating rules, giving the committee authority to make revisions to the Committee's operating procedures, so long as the Committee's core intent and purpose are unaffected.

Task Teams: Added statement to allow the Committee to identify and include the participation of individuals with expertise in specific areas not represented by committee membership.

Discussion: Commissioner Medina asked if the expectation was for monthly meetings, questioning the "as necessary" phrase. Mimura responded monthly meetings were the expectation, although more frequent meetings could occur for special purposes or less frequent meetings perhaps in summer or year-end holiday period where there was no business to discuss. Medina also asked how the conflict of interest issue is dealt with at the committee level; Director Gordon responded that any committees established fall under the same conflict of interest guidelines as Commissioners and staff – committee members would be asked to disclose (complete FPPC Form 700) and then refrain from discussion on any programs they could conceivably receive benefit from. Commissioner Karian suggested including a statement regarding disclosure and conflict of interest in the operating guidelines.

Public Comment: Ronald Arrington, consultant, applauded the Commission on the work being done to establish an Advisory Committee and suggested that, in the foreseeable future, appointees to this committee be without any conflict of interests, i.e., not seek or receive funding during their tenure on the committee.

Mimura also reviewed a suggested process and timeline for forming the initial composition of the Advisory Committee. Director Gordon stated he would contact the individuals he had recommended initially for appointment to the Committee and let them know the new process for application.

Discussion: Commissioner McIntyre asked whether attendance of Advisory Committee members at Commission meetings was going to be requested. Staff was directed to include a statement that at least the chair and/or vice chair and/or their designee attend all Commission meetings and all committee members attend at least two Commission meetings annually.

Commissioner Carozza said he felt that all committee members should receive a summary of action taken by the Commission. He also asked that Advisory Committee minutes reflect the minority opinion in discussions at the committee level.

Commissioner Medina asked that there be orientation and/or training for all committee members in terms of the Strategic Plan and the Children & Families Commission Act. Commissioner McIntyre added that the Ad Hoc Committee did discuss and suggest that there be some type of leadership training program for the parents appointed.

Commissioner Carozza (Parry second) moved approval of the Advisory Committee operating structure and guidelines as amended. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Discuss Funding Approaches for Community-Developed Initiatives and Commission-Developed Initiatives

Director Gordon stated this item was being brought back to the Commission, at their request, in a special meeting. In order to obtain as much public input as possible, a request for input was sent to the Commission's mailing list; the written responses received were distributed.

Mimura presented options that staff has discussed regarding protocols to be followed for funding options. He reviewed the programmatic strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan (programs, projects and services; systems improvement; and data improvement, evaluation and research), stating that the funding approaches should integrate into these three areas.

Commissioner Medina stated that there seems to be a lot of focus on priorities in the funding strategies, and since there is no prioritization in the current strategic plan wondered how the decision making would occur re funding. Mimura stated that this was the heart of the discussion, and a delineated set of specific areas of priority is essential as a foundation for the funding initiatives.

Mimura distinguished between Community-Developed and Commission-Based Initiatives as follows:

	Community Developed	Commission Based
Level of specificity of Strategic Plan priorities	General	Specific priority
Level of interaction between applicants and Commission staff in development of proposal/ program	Less interaction	More interaction
Geographic Scope of Program	Smaller, more local	Broader; county-wide
Programmatic Strategies from Strategic Plan	Program, Projects & Services	Systems Improvement (Data Improvement)

Henry Oputa, The Way Ministries, asked about whether both these initiatives share the same funds. Mimura responded that it will be from the same revenue source, the Prop. 10 funds received by Fresno County, but that from that source, the Commission can designate specific amounts into each initiative funding stream. Mimura also suggested that the Commission not lock themselves in with solid numbers because the Commission will be at the mercy of the quality of proposals received for making awards.

The Community Developed General Grants program would be:

- On-going, "user-friendly" initiative process for community groups to proactively develop and propose programs/ activities.
- Program/activities would address Strategic Plan goals and objectives
- Support would be considered for locally applied solutions to local challenges/issues, but are not intended for large-scale, countywide efforts
- Primary focus on program, projects and services (although systems/data improvement would not be excluded)
- Non-competitive with proposed activities assessed within the context of the Strategic Plan, need, etc., not against each other
- Letters of Inquiry (LOI) and full proposals accepted throughout the year
- Funding limits: To be defined
- Project Duration: To be defined

Commissioner Medina asked whether collaboration would or would not be encouraged for the general grants program. Mimura responded that collaboration would certainly not be discouraged, and that in the technical assistance plan proposed once a letter of inquiry is

received and reviewed by staff, the suggestion could be made to the agency regarding potential collaborative partners, but that the possibility of expanded funding limits to accommodate collaborative proposals has not been addressed. Medina stated she would like to have expanded funding for collaboration remain as an option.

Mimura reviewed the suggested application process:

1. LOI submitted outlining proposed activity
2. Full proposals would be by invitation only from among the LOIs received.

The LOIs would be reviewed by Commission staff and the Advisory Committee for recommendations re request for full proposals and would be based on consistency with core criteria (to be developed). Full proposals would be acted on by the Commission on a quarterly basis and/or other defined basis upon recommendation by staff/Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Medina asked about the role of the Advisory Committee in the review process. Mimura stated that the committee would be utilized to assist staff's review of LOIs received and probably the full proposal in order to aid staff in making a final recommendation on funding to the Commission, although this process is not fully developed. Medina stated that review of proposals is not included as a specific duty of the Advisory Committee and advised caution with full disclosure and conflict of interest from committee members, especially when they review LOIs or proposals. Commissioner Carozza suggested that the Advisory Committee be the "ratification body" as to plan (consistency with our mission and policies, best practices, best professional processes) but that they not make recommendations regarding awards.

Funding Limits: Mimura stated that this needs to be defined, whether there are maximum funding amounts or a general statement regarding a range of awards. Commissioner Carozza stated he didn't feel that there was a need to define funding limits but that in any staff recommendation for funding there would be a budget impact statement.

Public Comment: Vickie Hoyle, Fresno County EOC, asked whether there would be guidelines developed for information to be included in LOIs. Mimura responded that guidelines would be developed for LOIs.

Catherine Martin, San Joaquin Valley Health Consortium, asked for clarification on the Advisory Committee's role in reading of proposals. Mimura stated that the discussion on this issue has been about developing a mechanism that enables the Advisory Committee to assist staff's review of LOIs and proposals, but that nothing specific has been developed to date. He also reiterated that the operating guidelines for the Advisory Committee state that they are not a decision making body, but that they work to advise and inform staff who formulate recommendations that are taken to the Commission for final decision.

Project Duration: Mimura asked for input on whether or not a limitation on length of time for a project should be instituted. Commissioner Carozza stated he felt this would be a function of performance and that a sustainability factor should be included. Mimura further asked whether we wanted to be a body that funds services on an on-going basis or are we trying to create the spark, find the resource, that will get a project going and at some point back off.

Susan Thompson, Fresno County HSS, commented that regarding sustainability do we hold funds back from projects because there is no sustainability plan in place or do we move forward with good projects and build into them some resources to build sustainability.

Commissioner Medina asked whether a technical assistance plan would be forthcoming. Commissioner Carozza said he felt the Commission has an obligation to sustainability also, and he hopes that through some technical assistance we can look at ways to use

Commission funds to attract other funds, and therefore leverage our moneys to an even greater extent.

Technical Assistance: Mimura stated that there would be both pre-LOI and post-LOI technical assistance (TA) available to all applicants under the Community-Developed Initiative, but no direct assistance would be given to actual proposal preparation. Pre-LOI, the TA would be limited to clarification of intent of program and procedures. Post-LOI TA would include LOI feedback, suggestions for additional resources, potential collaborative partners, ensuring non-duplication of programs.

Commissioner Medina asked about a timeline from LOI to submission of full proposal. Mimura responded that this will be delineated; Los Angeles County uses "full proposal submission within two cycles", with a cycle being a quarter.

COMMISSION BASED INITIATIVES. Mimura stated there are two funding methods proposed under the Commission based initiatives, topic-specific RFPs and Commission-based partnerships.

Topic-Specific RFPs: RFP issued for specific priority area within the Strategic Plan as defined by the Commission. These activities would be limited to those addressing specifically identified priority areas, with the application and review process much the same as has been done with the two RFPs in 2001. Proposals would only be accepted within the timeline specified in the RFP, and maximum funding ranges and project duration would be also be defined. Technical assistance would be limited to factual clarification of the RPF, Strategic Plan, etc.

Commission-based Partnerships: The Commission will proactively participate in and facilitate/build partnerships with the intent to develop activities for priority areas in the Strategic Plan. This could be bi-directional because a community organization could come to the Commission with ideas for specific activities that could be developed into a Commission-based partnership. Consideration for funding could be given to activities addressing Commission identified priority areas and/or emerging needs and/or opportunities within the community. The process would include the Commission/partnering groups developing a "concept paper" which would be reviewed by the Advisory Committee and/or Commission staff regarding development of a full proposal. Concept papers and/or proposals would accepted on an on-going basis; they would be non-competitive, based on responsiveness to the Strategic Plan, priority areas and needs. Full proposals would be brought to the Commission for action at monthly meetings, as necessary.

Mimura outlined five overarching issues that apply to all the proposed strategies and asked for Commission input:

Sustainability: "Require" or "encourage" sustainability plans as part of funded activities? To date, Commission RFPs have encouraged but not required a sustainability plan. Should there be an allowance for a certain percentage of total funds to be used for building sustainability? Commissioner Carozza suggested that this be on a case by case basis. Commissioner Medina said that perhaps part of the overall technical assistance plan would include assistance in capacity building. Commissioner Carozza asked whether there have been any guidelines or statements from the State or other county Commissions regarding sustainability; Gordon responded that each county is handling this in their own way.

Matching / In-Kind Requirements: Should there be a requirement of some kind for matching and/or in-kind resources? Consensus was that the Commission should continue to ask a question about and encouraging matching or in-kind resources, but not require such.

Chair Waterston suggested that matching/in-kind resources be required at a certain level of funding.

Jan Fjellbo, West Fresno Health Care Coalition, stated, in regard to technical assistance, she felt that the program specialists are currently doing a good job in coaching as needed. But she wondered whether grassroots, start-up organizations that are doing wonderful things should be penalized because they can not come up with matching funds, and therefore should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Shirley Sanchez, West Fresno Crisis Center, suggested that after an initial cycle of funding that for continued funding matching or in-kind resources be required.

Commissioner Karian suggested that perhaps a sliding scale be developed for matching funding, based on the total budget for a program.

Eloise Gilbert, Fresno County HSS, suggested that matching funds be asked for, and if there are none an explanation of why not be required.

Application Limitations: Should the number of proposals from a single group be limited? Should public agencies and community-based organizations be treated the same or differently?

Susan Thompson, Fresno County HSS, said she felt it was not about an "agency" but more about specific programs, and if an agency is capable of assembling the necessary infrastructure to operate a given program efficiently, who cares how many awards they receive?

On-Going Funding: For service provision grants, should the Commission provide on-going funding of a program beyond the initial contract term? Should there be some statement so that we are managing expectations appropriately? Commissioner Medina stated that in the past we have essentially said "good bye" at the end of the contract term, and that there was no reason that we could not require a sustainability plan for continued funding. Commissioner Karian stated that one purpose of Prop. 10 was because there was so little funding in this area. Commissioner Carozza stated that if currently funded groups came back to us, and they were doing a great job, perhaps we should continue to fund their program.

Total Funding Allocation to Initiatives: The Commission will allocate funding across the three funding approaches, and make mid-course adjustments to these allocations depending on awards made and funds available, with no mandate to award all funds.

Director Gordon commented that invariably questions will be received regarding funding allocations. For instance, if the total were \$9 million, should the allocation be \$3 million to each funding approach, or should the Commission put more weight toward one of the approaches over the other. Commissioner Medina stated that determining funding allocations to the various approaches, in her mind, would be dependent on the priorities yet to be defined.

Vickie Hoyle, FCEOC, stated she felt priorities were the key and she felt the Commission has done a lot of work in establishing the community-developed priorities through the focus groups, especially in the rural areas. The priorities that have been developed should drive the allocation of funding for the various initiatives.

Public Comment: Susan Thompson congratulated the Commission on the discussion that took place on community initiatives.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Carozza (McIntyre second) moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:40 p.m.